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THE HAMPSTEAD CONGRESS:

OR, THE HAPPY PAIR.

LONDON,

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BRITISH MUSEUM

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IF ancient Sages well adviſe,
In This all Human Prudence lies:
" Let all things to your Purpoſe tend,
" And ſute your Means unto your End."
So " Like to Like does beſt agree,"
The Proverb ſays, which ſhews that we,
In ev'ry Act we undertake,
A ſtrict Enquiry ſhould make,
And try, in Reaſon's equal Balance,
The Weight of ev'ry Circumſtance,

Of

Of Time, or Place, or Quality,
Of High, or Low, or what Degree;
All which, though by the Schools deny'd
To be Eſſentials, or reſide
In Things themſelves, yet ſtick ſo cloſe,
As by their outward Magick Force,
The ſelf-ſame Things can change at Will
From Right to Wrong, or Good to Ill;
And though our Wiſhes we obtain,
At laſt can give us Joy or Pain.

But yet all Doubts hence to remove,
For *Ipſe dixits* nothing prove,
Suppoſe your Pad or Coach-Horſe dead,
Another's wanted in his ſtead;
'Tis not enough a Horſe you buy
With riſing Creſt and ſparkling Eye,
Unleſs their Paces equal are,
You'll ſoon repent your ill-match'd Pair.
Beſides, 'twill ſtand you much in heed
To know the Blood and Country Breed;

How broke, how mouth'd, for Education
Confirm'd by Habit, Uſe, or Faſhion;
Alike in Man and Beaſt prevails,
To Vice or Virtue turns the Scales.
The *Cambrian* Colt that thus retains
True ancient *Britiſh* Blood in his Veins,
On *Brecknock*'s ſtony Mountains bred,
A Stranger to the flowery Mead,
His fellow Goat in wanton Play
Purſues where-e'er he leads the Way;
From Rock to Rock ſecure they go,
Nor dread the threatning Vale below;
Yet to the Bit when brought, is found
To ſtumble moſt on Carpet-Ground.
Again, that Horſe, ſo Gay, ſo Trim,
So neatly turn'd in every Limb,
That won, you ſay, *New-market* Plate,
You wiſh to buy, that you in State
May ride that rugged Mile or two
That lie betwixt your Friend and you;
'Tis well, yet once be wiſe, and take
A Friend's Advice, your Life's at Stake,

Pre

Prepare your Will without Delay,
And take your Surgeon into Pay.
This Rule, if well obſerv'd, you'll find
Prevails alike through every Kind.
Had *Jowler* not been taught the Deer
To hunt, and ſcorn the trifling Hare,
The Fox, the Hare, the Deer for Game,
To *Jowler* had been all the ſame.
Once more, upon the bloody Pit
You turn your *Shakebag*, make your Bet,
And five to four you ſcarce have laid,
When lo! your favourite Cock lies dead;
Damn'd Chance! from whence could this proceed?
Why, Sir, your Cock was Dunghill-breed;
Yet ſtill you ſtorm, and rave and ſwear,
And Fortune muſt your Curſes bear.

But now, methinks, my Reader cries,
You fain would paſs for wond'rous wiſe;
To what does all this Lecture tend?
And where will your dull Moral end?

You idly hold us by the Ears,
With Dogs and Horſes, Bulls, and Bears;
Still but repeat the ſame Things o'er,
And tell us what we knew before.

Have Patience, Sir, and you ſhall find
That I have ſomething more behind,
A Tale to which all yet I've ſaid,
Does but to th' Play like Prologue lead.
What follows then, if falſe or true
It matters not, 'tis told to you.

Sir *John* had long unrival'd ſhone,
The gayeſt, brighteſt Man in Town,
Had born the Bell with all the Fair,
Alike their equal Joy and Care;
The Rounds of Pleaſure oft' had run,
Of every Kind with *Solomon*,
Till wearied, now they both agree
That all is empty Vanity;
He found his Years Accompt arrive,
Oh fatal Thought! to Forty-five.

Old Age he ſaw come creeping on,
Oppreſs'd with Palſy, Gout, or Stone;
Yet had no Nurſe, whoſe gentle Touch,
Might ſooth his Pains, or guide his Crutch,
No Heir to his Eſtate, for ſo
The wiſer Laws decree, you know,
That many a jovial Boy his Mother
May boldly claim, yet have no Father:
He then reſolv'd a Wife to take,
Atonement for his Sins to make,
And manage wiſely the laſt Stake.

" To look before we leap is ſafe,
" Old Birds are ſeldom caught with Chaff.
Where then this prudent Nymph to find?
Ay, there's the doubt that lags behind.
In *Hymen*'s Lottery oft' ariſe
Ten Blanks, they ſay, for one good Prize;
Who ſuch a Chance would run muſt prove
Himſelf a Fool, or be in Love.
But yet he knew one only Fair,
He thought, would ſute him to a Hair;

By Guardian-Aunt, from Country-Seat,
Brought up to Town, there to complete
That Wit and Beauty Nature gave,
To learn to talk, and to behave;
To pluck from Things their falſe Diſguiſe,
To read the World, and then deſpiſe.
Soon chang'd in every Air and Feature,
Miſs quite appear'd another Creature,
From all around exact ſhe knew
What to expect, and what was due;
A perfect Critick now in Dreſs,
In Play, in Politicks, no leſs.
Of Viſits too, each Night ſhe kept
A ſtrict Accompt before ſhe ſlept;
Prepar'd againſt To-morrow ſtill,
Her precious Time how beſt to fill,
With Church, her Toilet, or *Quadrille*.
I ſaid with Church, for our good Fair
Aſſign'd to each their niceſt Share;
Whilſt gay Sir *John*, or he's bely'd,
Her peeviſh Virtue oft' had try'd.

What then? his Courtſhip now you ſay
Is in the honourable Way.
A Title ſure, of weaker Grace,
May take precedency of Place;
Nor leſs ſincere his Love be found,
For that ſhe brings ten Thouſand Pound;
So all's agreed, and we allow
Plain *Miſs* no more, my Lady now.

Mat Prior here might well relate
The Show, the Equipage, and State,
In merry Vein could beſt diſplay
The Triumphs of the Wedding-day;
The ſplended Liveries, gilded Coach,
The Evening-Ball, and Night's Approach;
Who through the Ring the Bride-cake drew,
The Garter won, or Stocking threw;
Who hit the Bridegroom, or the Bride,
With twenty merry Jokes beſide;
For well he knew the ſecret Art,
With witty Tale to reach the Heart,

Th' inſtructive

Th' inſtructive Moral to inſtill,
And how to gild the bitter Pill,
Whilſt I my homeſpun Story tell,
Regardleſs whether ill or well.
If *Matthew*'s Rule can ſtand the Teſt,
He's half abſolv'd who has confeſs'd.
From Hope or Fear alike then freed,
Of Praiſe or Cenſure we'll proceed.

Three Honey-Moons had chang'd their Round,
From Full to Wain, yet ſtill they found
Unchang'd our conſtant Dove-like Pair,
Whilſt nought was heard but *Love* and *Dear*.
The Fourth came on, (but not with Horn,
You think prophetic) but one Morn
As o'er their Tea our Couple ſat,
And fondly talk'd of This and That,
Sir *John* began, My Dear, at laſt,
Now we theſe tedious Forms have paſt,
Of Viſits, Compliments, and Noiſe,
We'll e'en retire, and taſte the Joys

The Country Life alone can give,
From all this Crowd a kind Reprieve;
To-morrow, I have Orders given,
That all be ready juſt at Seven.
The Country Life, Sir *John*? replies
My Lady, in a ſtrange Surprize;
Are then three Months of Pleaſure found
A Purchaſe worth Ten thouſand Pound?
The Country Life! what, leave the Town,
Like Bankrupt Gentry, and go down
T' attend the Farm, and mind the Dairy?
Did we for ſuch ſweet Comforts marry?
No, no, ſhe ſaid, ſhe'd never do't,
She vow'd ſhe would not ſtir a Foot.
Whilſt bold Sir *John*, with equal Heat,
Replies, My Dear, when next we meet,
You know your Duty, muſt be where
Occaſion calls and worldly Care;
Content, I muſt your Abſence mourn
'Till then, and Vow for Vow return.

To-morrow's come, at Seven's Approach
Sir *John* is ſeated in his Coach;
But where's my Lady? Sir, in Bed;
In Bed? Drive on, the Time, he ſaid,
Is now too critical to loſe,
There's Magick in the Wedding-Shoes,
So reads the Law 'twixt Man and Wife,
Who firſt ſubmits muſt ſerve for Life.
In ſhort, who late were all Folks Wonder,
Ere Night are fifty Miles aſunder.

To anxious Thoughts, and mutual Care,
Awhile we leave our diſtant Pair;
No dear Supplies for Dreſs or Play,
Beſides, what will the World ſay!
Whilſt ſad Sir *John* his Bottle ſought,
In vain, to drown the diſmal Thought
Of Freedom loſt, and Honour's Foe,
Woman's Revenge, what that might do.
At laſt, deſpairing of their Ends,
By Treaties, Meſſages, and Friends,

And Altercations, *pro* and *con*,
A Congreſs is agreed upon.
But where? for often that no leſs
A Point is found, than War or Peace;
Whilſt both had here by Vow diſown'd
The Country one, and one the Town.

High on her Hill where *Hampſtead* ſtands,
And all the ſubject Plain commands;
For healthful Springs, and Air admir'd,
From Town and Country both retir'd;
While from her clear and lofty Brow
The great *Metropolis* below,
The wond'ring Eye ſurveys; the Fair,
Of either Sex, hither repair
For Health or Beauty, Love or Wit,
Pleaſures of ev'ry kind to hit
Each various Taſte of Swain or Toaſt,
And Health is found whilſt Hearts are loſt.

Here then, ſuppoſe, our Couple met,
The Tea-Table in Order ſet,

That frequent Scene of great Debate;
On either Side a Party ſat,
Deeply experienc'd to decree
The Right or Wrong of either's Plea.
Amongſt the Reſt, the Muſe was there,
Unſeen, in ſecret Character,
As Time as laſting, to record
Each Circumſtance of Deed or Word.
And firſt, Sir *John*, his Honours made,
With artful Rhetorick diſplay'd,
To win or loſe the Prize, his Wife,
The Pleaſures of the Rural Life.
The beauteous Landſkip, flow'ry Fields;
The Sweets that Nature's Garden yields;
The purling Stream, the ſhady Bower,
The Muſick of the woodland Choir;
The Morning Chaſe, the ſweet Repaſt
At Noon, at Night when gently caſt
In Sleep's ſoft Bands, no Cares to prove,
And undiſturb'd by aught but Love.
Again he urg'd, what Peace of Mind
From Duties, well perform'd, we find;

How oft' on Her, by Pity led,
For Health reſtor'd, or Hunger fed,
The poor Man's grateful Prayer ſhould wait,
And bleſs her hoſpitable Gate,
Deſcrib'd his wide-extended Ground,
A little Kingdom all around,
Where, free from Empire's Cares or Pain,
She, happy Queen, alone ſhould reign.

My Lady lent a liſt'ning Ear
To all, then ſtraight reply'd, My Dear
You know, of Faces and of Mind,
A like Variety we find,
So fix'd by Nature's Power alone,
In vain we think them in our own;
Then granting all you've ſaid as true,
And I, you know, ne'er doubt of you;
Yet what is all your Rural Scene,
And Ruſtick Sports, to thoſe I mean,
With which the Town in circling Joys
Each Moment of our Time employs?

The City-Jaunt each Morning made,
To view the Jar, or rich Brocade;
The Chairs command the yielding Crowd,
Th' obliging Bow on Friends beſtow'd.
The Day's yet emptier Hours to fill
With *Ombre*, or at *Dear Quadrille*;
At Night, the Opera's ſplendid Throng,
And charming *Handel*'s heav'nly Song:
Round *Vaux-Hall*'s Galaxy to roam,
Or *Ranelagh*'s ſtupendous Dome.
The Court, the Park, the Ring, the Play,
The Flambeaux blaze that rivals Day,
Aſſemblies, Maſquerades, Reviews,
Balls, Marriages, Divorces, News
Of ev'ry kind, (till out of Breath)
The Life with theſe, without them Death:
And Health's a Jewel ſeldom found,
You know, my Dear, in ev'ry Ground
Or Air alike, at leaſt with me,
As all in one Advice agree,
Both *Beaufort*, *Lee*, *Dod*, *Barrowbee*. and

Back from the Charge Sir *John* recoil'd,
As one at his own Weapons foil'd;
Vanquiſh'd, deſpairing, forc'd to yield,
Submiſſive bow'd, and left the Field.
Again, with heavy Heart and Thought,
Down to his Country-Seat, he ſought
How beſt with Patience to endure
Thoſe Ills that would admit no Cure,
No Cure but Death; but did they ſo?
Have Patience, Sir, and you ſhall know;
When interrupted thus and croſt,
The Muſe prolongs her Tale the moſt,
Put out both of her Thoughts and *Rhime*,
She'd elſe have done in half the time.

One Morn then as my Lady ſat
Alone in penſive Mood, at what?
No Matter; ſudden at the Door
Three ſolemn Knocks are heard, no more;
Not ſuch as beat the Quality,
Of Coach, or Chair approaching nigh.

What Noiſe is that? ſee, *Betty*, run;
Madam, 'tis *Roger* from Sir *John*.
Straight *Roger*, with an aukward Grace,
Of formal Bows, and mournful Face,
Sigh'd heavily, and ſhook his Head,
Then, ſoon as Grief gave way, he ſaid,
Madam, alas! ſad News I bring,
For me, I'm ſure, 'tis the worſt Thing
That e'er fell out, for ſcarce Sir *John*,
As I may ſay, was well got home,
And juſt had enter'd in-a-door;
When all along, flat on the Floor,
Down my poor Maſter fell, and this
Was all he ſaid; To your Miſtreſs
Remember me, to whom, to prove
The laſt Aſſurance of my Love,
My All I have given; her now obey,
And ſhe your Duty will repay.

Who's there, in haſte, my Lady cry'd;
Bid *Day* this Moment to provide

A Coach, if yet, oh! who can tell,
He lives to take my laſt Farewel.

To paſs the Time, and Miles away,
Betty had now her Part to play;
How well in Weeds of Bombazeen
Her Ladyſhip would look, again
Her Power o'er rival Hearts reſtore,
With ſurer Conqueſts than before.
Experience now had taught how vain
To truſt to Man's inſulting Reign;
Who then their future Hopes would try,
Should languiſh, ſigh, adore, and die.
With Doctrines ſuch as theſe to hear,
The Gipſy ſooth'd my Lady's Ear.
Till now arriv'd, the Houſe they found
In ſilent Sorrow all around,
No Tongue had Power to relate
Their Maſter's ſad and ſudden Fate;
But to an inward Room, the Way
Directing, where outſtretch'd he lay,

Breathleſs and pale, and is it then
That thus we meet? thou beſt of Men!
My Lady cry'd, alas! too late
Thy Value's found; would angry Fate
But kindly hear my Prayer, once more
To me thy dearer Life reſtore,
Nought from my Heart ſhould e'er remove
This ſureſt Inſtance of thy Love;
Each Wiſh, each Thought, would I reſign
To thee, thy Will alone be mine.
But, ah! in vain! This Kiſs alone
Then ſadly take.—— Up ſtarts Sir *John!*
And caught the Fair in cloſe Embrace,
Then wip'd the Flour from off his Face;
Thy Prayers, my Dear, are heard once more,
The Fates to thee my Life reſtore;
No future Ills ſhall e'er remove
This happieſt Baſis of our Love;
Our Vows again are join'd, and mine,
With equal Truth, ſhall anſwer thine,
Whilſt all my future Care ſhall be
To ſee them well perform'd by thee.

FINIS.

Breathless and pale, and is it then
That thus we meet? thou best of Men!
My Lady cry'd, alas! too late
Thy Value's found; would angry Fate
But kindly hear my Prayer, once more
To me thy dearer Life restore,
Nought from my Heart should e'er remove
This fureft Influence of thy Love;
Each Wish, each Thought, would I resign
To thee, thy Will alone be mine,
But, ah! in vain! This Life alone
Then gladly take.—— Up flarts Sir John,
And cuugbt the Fair in close Embrace,
Then wip'd the Flour from off his Face;
Thy Prayers, my Dear, are heard once more,
No Fates to thee my Life reftore;
No future Ills shall e'er remove
This happieft Bands of our Love;
Our Vows again are join'd, and mine,
With equal Truth, shall answer thine,
Fulfil all my future Care shall be
To see them well performed by thee.